
Borough of Hyndburn

**ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Environmental Health Officer

GEORGE GREENWOOD, M.R.S.H., M.R.I.P.H.H., M.A.E.H.O.

1974

B O R O U G H O F H Y N D B U R N

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

A N N U A L R E P O R T

of the

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

George Greenwood, M.R.S.H., M.R.I.P.H.H., M.A.E.H.O.

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Air Pollution and Noise	John L. Palk

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	Michael G. Bell (Authorised Meat Inspector)
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Administrative Assistant

Mrs. A. Thornley

Clerical Assistants

Peter Brandwood

Miss P. Oughton

Mrs. P. J. Griffiths (Air Pollution and Noise)

William Whiteley (Cleansing Depot)

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Secretariat

Secretary

Miss M. Cunliffe

Shorthand/Typists

Mrs. T. Chaplow

Miss E. Kelsall

Receptionist

Mrs. M. Burke

Cleansing Superintendent

Ernest Livesey

Cleansing Inspectors

Ernest Ingham

Fred Teese

Fred Vickery

.....

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Mr. A. C. Bushnell, F.R.I.C., M.Chem. .

District Community Physician

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Mr. John King Shaw, M.R.C.V.S.

Environmental Health Department,
20 Cannon Street,
Accrington.

To the Mayor and Members of the
Hyndburn Borough Council

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the first Annual Report on the Environmental Health Services of the Borough for the year 1974. In view of the reorganisation of Local Government which took place on 1st April, 1974 this report relates only to the period from that date until the year end, a period of 9 months.

Whilst this report contains certain statistics relating to 1974, I have taken the opportunity not only of looking retrospectively but also to the future in the light of the very valuable experience gained.

As with any new invention one must expect "teething troubles" and whilst Local Government cannot be termed as invention, far from it in fact, the reorganisation carried out during the year is not an everyday occurrence and as such, whilst many problems were envisaged and plans made accordingly, inevitably unforeseen difficulties arose which necessitated prompt remedial action.

An acute shortage of professional staff during the year necessitated an immediate re-structuring and the employment of suitable personnel to undertake some of the more routine functions of the Department. This has now proved satisfactory and, providing the existing professional level can be maintained, will ensure that the service provided is of the highest standard.

Two teams have been established each consisting of a Senior Environmental Health Officer, an Assistant Environmental Health Officer and an Environmental Health Technician supplemented by a Rodent Operator and Drainage Operative. These are responsible for the day-to-day work of the Department. In addition, specialist sections undertake the duties of Atmospheric Pollution and Noise, Housing, Food, Offices and Shops.

Unfortunately the Department's staff are housed in two separate buildings, the main office in Cannon Street, Accrington and the Air Pollution and Noise Control staff in Blackburn Road, Accrington. This is a most undesirable situation leading to all types of complications and I sincerely hope that in the very near future it will be possible to carry out modifications so that the staff can be housed in one unit. This will, of course, benefit the Authority equally as much as the staff.

Due to the inevitable upheaval during the year it has been impossible to achieve a normal planned programme of work and as a result very little survey work has been carried out, the majority of the staff time being involved with complaint investigation. It is hoped that in the near future a more settled atmosphere can be obtained thus allowing time for investigations to begin into a number of the many problems which exist throughout the Borough.



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NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE BOROUGH

Area	18,077 acres
Population (Census 1971)	80,533
(Department of Environment's estimate of resident population, mid-1974)	79,900
Rateable Value (April 1974)	£6,275,832
Sum represented by a penny rate	£57,400

The social conditions of the Borough are generally good. Chief industries are textile weaving, finishing and printing, textile and general engineering, chemical manufacturing, brick manufacturing, food manufacture and preparation and dairy farming.

WATER SUPPLY

The Borough is supplied with water in the main by the Calder Water Supply Unit of the North West Water Authority, although two areas in the south west, Knuzden and Belthorn, are supplied by the Fylde Water Supply Unit.

All public water supplies are passed through pressure filters and chlorinated but regular routine samples are taken by the Units from every source and submitted for bacteriological and chemical analysis. Four samples of treated water submitted by this Department for bacteriological analysis were reported to be satisfactory.

The Water Supply Unit does not fluoridate the water supplied to the Borough although some water has a natural fluoride content of 0.05 parts per million. The public water supplied by the Calder Water Supply Unit is liable to plumbo-solvency due to the acid nature (low pH value) of the gathering grounds. This water is, therefore, treated with lime and chalk to raise the value to a safe level - pH 7.5 to 8.0. The lead content is less than 5 parts per million.

Approximately 150 dwellings do not receive a supply of water from the public mains but have to rely on private supplies from wells and springs. It is hoped, in the near future, to commence a study of these supplies but it is most unlikely that many of these services can be replaced by mains supplies as they are mainly in the isolated rural parts of the Borough and the cost of such mains supply would probably be too high. Despite this, however, it is possible that improvements could be made to many of the private supplies, some of which are liable to contamination from animal and other sources, by the installation of small domestic filters and chlorinators. During the year 6 samples were taken from private supplies and of these 5 were found to be contaminated to varying degrees. In all these cases the householders have been instructed to boil all water used for domestic purposes.

The problem of inadequate water supplies is another aspect of this work which requires a more detailed study. Whilst a grant of up to £40 is available towards the total cost of the work carried out by the Water Supply Unit in providing a separate service to dwellings it would appear that very few owners are taking advantage of this facility, possibly because of the high cost of

carrying out this work. Unfortunately far too many dwellings are still supplied with water through common service pipes and with the increased use of water per head of population due, no doubt, to the increased number of appliances in use, many of the common pipes provided when the houses were built many years ago are now inadequate.

There are no premises within the Borough that rely solely upon stand pipes for their supply of water although this facility is sometimes used temporarily in cases of emergency.

Regular visits are made to the two swimming baths in the Borough and during the year 28 samples were submitted for bacteriological analysis, 25 of which were found to be satisfactory.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

As notification of infectious diseases is an essential provision for preventive action by the Local Authority, certain diseases have been made notifiable. These have been listed below together with the number of notifications received during the year in each category.

Acute Encephalitis	-
Acute Meningitis	-
Acute Poliomyelitis	-
Anthrax	-
Cholera	-
Diphtheria	-
Dysentery (Amoebic or Bacillary)	122
Food Poisoning (or suspected Food Poisoning)	10
Infective Jaundice	28
Leprosy	-
Leptospirosis	-
Malaria	-
Measles	47
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	-
Paratyphoid Fever	-
Plague	-
Relapsing Fever	-
Scarlet Fever	9
Smallpox	-
Tetanus	-
Tuberculosis	18
Typhoid Fever	-
Typhus	-
Whooping Cough	47
Yellow Fever	-
Total	<hr/> 281 <hr/>

A Local Authority may, by order, subject to the approval of the Minister of Health, make notifiable any infectious disease in their area, e.g. during outbreaks of smallpox it is sometimes considered advisable to make chickenpox notifiable.

When a case of notifiable disease occurs in any building used for human habitation including shops, canal boats, caravans and certain other premises, the notification of the relevant facts to the Local Authority is compulsory under the provisions of the Public Health Act, 1936, Sec. 144 (as amended). The attending medical practitioner is the responsible person and is required to submit at once the relevant information on a form prescribed for this purpose.

TUBERCULOSIS

18 new cases of Tuberculosis were notified during the year; of these 12 were respiratory cases and 6 non-respiratory.

The incidence of males to females infected was as follows:-

Respiratory	10 males	2 females
Non-Respiratory	4 males	2 females
<u>Age Periods</u>	<u>Pulmonary</u>	<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>
<u>Years</u>	M F	M F
0	- -	- -
1	- -	- -
5	- -	- -
10	- -	- 1
15	- -	1 -
20	2 -	1 1
25	1 -	- -
35	- 1	- -
45	3 1	2 -
55	- -	- -
65 and upwards	4 -	- -
Age unknown	- -	- -
Totals	10 2	4 2

It is interesting to note that only 2 cases were reported of infection in persons below the age of 20 years, both being non-respiratory cases, whilst 11 cases were aged 35 and upwards, 9 being respiratory and 2 non-respiratory.

At the end of the year the total number of cases of Tuberculosis remaining on the active register was 199 as follows:-

	<u>Respiratory</u>	<u>Non-Respiratory</u>
Males	105	31
Females	43	20
Totals	<u>148</u>	<u>51</u>

FOOD POISONING

A total of 10 cases were notified during the year but the types and sources of infection remain unidentified. There was one family outbreak involving 3 cases; the remaining 7 cases being sporadic.

DYSENTERY

An outbreak of dysentery (*shigella sonnei*) occurred towards the end of the year at a day nursery in the Borough. During the investigations diagnostic specimens were taken from 63 families of which 31 families were found to have one or more members carrying the infection. It was necessary for the Department to exclude several children from school until free from infection and two food handlers were excluded from their work. Two other persons involved in the handling of food were excluded from work by their medical practitioner.

Tests on specimens taken by the Department are carried out by Dr. L. Robertson at the Public Health Laboratory, Preston Royal Infirmary, and Dr. Darling at the Bacteriology Laboratory, Blackburn Royal Infirmary and without their willing assistance, co-operation and advice the control of infection within the Borough would have been infinitely more onerous.

CARAVANS

During the year a considerable amount of time was spent moving "itinerant caravan dwellers" from a number of pieces of open land within the district. Unfortunately caravans is a subject which understandably provokes emotional feelings both from members of the public and from the caravan dwellers themselves. The staff have endeavoured to maintain a balance which would alleviate the concern of the residents who are annoyed and irritated by the itinerants, but which would not result in the hounding of the caravaners which in my opinion would serve no useful purpose.

One must be very careful that the whole problem of itinerants does not become exaggerated out of all proportion. There is no doubt whatsoever that a number of these people are aggressive, have filthy habits and are a constant irritation to people living immediately adjoining these open sites, but it is sometimes felt that the "public health" problem is not as great as it is frequently made out to be.

The provision of a permanent site at Altham which has been discussed for some considerable time may possibly help to alleviate the situation, but in my opinion it is most unlikely that this will be the complete and final solution.

Within the Borough there are 2 privately owned sites catering for travelling caravan dwellers. These are well organised and expertly managed and are provided with all the necessary services and consequently cause no trouble whatsoever even though they are situated in residential areas. A licensed holiday site is situated in the Borough and this also creates no problems for the Department.

SANITARY ACCOMMODATION AND DRAINAGE

A survey is in progress to determine the number of waste water closets still existing within the Borough and it is hoped that a programme can soon be implemented, based on the conversion to the fresh water system of about 200 such closets per year, with a view to the abolition of all these obsolete and insanitary appliances by the end of the present decade.

One cannot be satisfied with the present low annual rate of conversion of waste water closets, 49 W.W.C. conversions being carried out at a grant cost of £1,548, although there are a number of reasons for this.

The main one is the rapidly escalating cost of the works involved. A grant of £30 is paid by this Authority but it would appear that this amount is not having the effect of stimulating the interest of the occupiers. Labour shortages and an increasing inclination of contractors to undertake easier and more remunerative work is another reason, together with a reluctance of employees to undertake this dirty and laborious work. All this is obvious from contractors' refusal to tender and it is becoming extremely difficult to employ someone who is prepared to carry out the work however urgent it may be.

Sanitary conveniences situated at the bottom of a yard are neither private nor convenient, and I doubt the wisdom of perpetuating them. The object should be to ensure that all houses within Hyndburn are provided with a toilet accessible from within the premises. I should also like to see the tall outbuildings and walls to the yards of terraced houses eliminated with the consequent environmental improvement. However, I feel that, for the time being anyway, we should continue to encourage the installation of internal toilets with the aid of intermediate or full Improvement Grants, reserving action, voluntary or compulsory, for external closets where appropriate. A number will be abolished automatically as the clearance programme progresses.

I have dealt at length with this subject as I consider the abolition of waste water closets to be one of the most important sanitary requirements of the Borough.

I am becoming very alarmed at the increasing number of unsatisfactory and inadequate septic tanks which are coming to the notice of the Department. I was hoping that by extending the sewerage system a number of these tanks could be replaced in the near future but unfortunately, due to the present severe financial restrictions and the need to carry out extensive repairs and replacements to the existing sewers, it would appear that such improvements are out of the question and these owners will be faced with the costs of carrying out extensive repairs or replacements in order to abate the nuisances being caused.

The Department offers a service to the public, free of charge, for the releasing of choked drains and closets. This function is carried out by Drainage Operatives who can call upon the expert assistance of the Department's professional staff should it be necessary to carry out further tests to trace chokages, defects or to offer advice to the householder.

Where mains drainage is not available, and this applies in the main to the rural areas of the Borough, a weekly service for emptying pail closets is provided without charge. Whilst these appliances are most undesirable it is unlikely that we shall see the end of them for a number of years. In many instances it will be impossible to extend the sewerage system to these outlying districts and frequently the installation of a septic tank is impracticable.

REFUSE STORAGE ACCOMMODATION

In order to rationalise the provision of refuse receptacles, the Council has instituted a municipal bin provision scheme whereby the Local Authority provides the initial bin for all new premises and undertakes the replacement of all receptacles subject to a renewal frequency of about 8 years. In effect this means that all premises within the Borough have one bin supplied and replaced by the Authority. Additional receptacles remain the responsibility of the owner both for provision and replacement. During the year, 1,927 bins have been supplied in accordance with this policy.

Plastic bin liners were in use by several authorities prior to re-organisation and this Authority has continued this facility with only minor additions. The use of bin liners ensures that the refuse is collected more hygienically than the more conventional method and affords a considerable saving in time. Unfortunately the additional cost of providing the one-trip plastic liner is very high and so, in view of the present economic restrictions, the scheme cannot be extended to other premises in the Borough unless compensatory savings can be achieved elsewhere.

Paper sacks are provided for a small minority of premises in the Borough. These are used, in conjunction with wall-mounted frame holders, in premises where it is either undesirable or impracticable to provide the normal refuse bin.

RODENT CONTROL

During the period 1st April, 1974 to 31st December, 1974, 126 confirmed rat infestations and 290 confirmed mice infestations were treated. Many further complaints of both types were unconfirmed upon investigation.

A systematic treatment has been carried out of all the sewers in the area, entailing the poisoning of the 3,800 manholes. The control of rodent infestations within the sewer system is an important aspect of Rodent Control as the spread of infestation from the sewer system is the main source of surface infestation.

CONTROL OF STRAY DOGS

In order to attempt to bring under control the number of stray dogs in the Borough a report was submitted to the Environmental Health and Control Committee. As a result, the Council approved the appointment

of a dog warden and arrangements are now well in hand; it is expected that the scheme will be operational early in the New Year.

The problem of stray dogs is not a new one, but, unfortunately, the legislation on the statute book at the present time gives very little assistance to a Local Authority who are desirous of putting an end to the problem once and for all.

If members of the public appreciated the number of diseases and conditions which are communicable to the human subject via the dog, and also the severity of some of these, I feel that the number of animals which are allowed to foul the footways, parks and other public open spaces would be reduced drastically overnight.

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Excluding those situated in parks and other places of recreation and entertainment, there are twenty two public conveniences within the Borough. These vary greatly both in age, construction and facilities provided but most have, unfortunately, one thing in common; vandalism. The constant repair of the structures and replacement of the fittings is becoming increasingly expensive, and it is proving impossible to maintain the service to the standard desired whilst at the same time keeping within a reasonable budget. For this reason a report is being prepared for the consideration of the Members which will highlight the problems associated with a service of this type.

It is my opinion that conveniences should be provided at strategic places to ensure minimum inconvenience to the public; be provided with adequate facilities, including hand-washing, and maintained to the highest standard of cleanliness. Experience has proved that where conveniences are closed during the hours of darkness the amount of damage caused by vandals has been reduced considerably. It is unfortunate that the thoughtless acts of a few people should be allowed to influence the standard of service provided for the majority but this appears now to be a fact of life.

A comprehensive appraisal of the problem is being carried out and it is hoped that a satisfactory compromise can be reached whereby a standard of service can be provided and maintained which will satisfy both the patrons and the ratepayer.

LICENCES

In addition to the licences issued under legislation mentioned elsewhere in this report the Department is responsible for issuing licences under various enactments and details of these, together with the number of licences issued are as follows:-

Late Night Refreshment Houses Act 1969	6
Pet Animals Act 1951	9
Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963	6
Riding Establishment Act 1964	6
Breeding of Dogs Act 1975	8
Scrap Metal Dealers (Registration only)	17
Slaughtermen	14
* Dog Licences Act 1959	3,408

* these licences are issued by the Post Office acting as agent for this Authority.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACTS 1948 and 1951

No action was necessary during the year under the provisions of the above-mentioned Acts for the removal of persons in need of care and attention.

Section 50 of the 1948 Act imposes on the Local Authority the duty of causing to be buried or cremated the body of any person who has died in their area, in any case where it appears to the Authority that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body will be made otherwise than by the Authority.

During the year under review no such burials were effected.

HEALTH EDUCATION & HOME SAFETY

Prior to Local Government re-organisation the responsibility for administering these functions rested with the Medical Officer of Health and were carried out, in the main, by Health Visitors and Health Education Officers employed by the County and County Borough Councils.

Public Health Inspectors, however, have always assisted when possible by arranging talks on their particular functions and close co-operation has been maintained with the Health Visitors and Health Education Officers.

Following re-organisation the responsibility for Home Safety became a District Council function and in the final report of the Public Health Project Group originally submitted to the Hyndburn Area Co-ordinating Committee in 1973, it was recommended that a post of Health Education Officer should be created.

No such specific appointment was made and it was intended that the work be included as part of the duties of a Principal Inspector.

Since re-organisation it has been impossible for any one member of the staff to take over complete responsibility for this function with the result that no great impact has been made in Health Education or Home Safety.

At the same time Health Education is a continuing process and every opportunity is taken to promote this work. Talks have been and are to be given by members of the staff to various organisations and the

Department has co-operated with the Accrington and Oswaldtwistle Civic Societies in their efforts to educate the public in the problems of litter and rubbish dumping.

A working party of the Lancashire County Council is reviewing the activities of the former Accident Prevention Council as there is a feeling that Home Safety may more appropriately be provided by the Area Health Authority in conjunction with the Health Education Service.

Despite these doubts no change in the legislation has yet been made, and the Department, in any case, will continue to play its part in Health Education. In fact it is hoped that our activities in this field of work will increase with time and at some point in the future it is possible that a specific post will need to be created if the Authority is to adequately carry out its responsibilities.

PUBLIC MORTUARY

The arrangements agreed some years ago between the former Accrington Borough Council and the Blackburn and District Hospital Management Committee for the use of facilities at Victoria Hospital as the Public Mortuary have been continued for the Borough and are operating satisfactorily.

HOUSING

In order to understand fully the size of the problem facing the Department in the housing field, I feel that it is essential to explain briefly the situation as it existed on 1st April, 1974.

Each of the merging Authorities had programmes for the clearance of sub-standard properties but these varied greatly, not only in the stages of development but also, and this is where many problems have arisen since that date, in the method of implementation. To illustrate more fully; some Authorities had recently represented areas to be cleared and had made Compulsory Purchase Orders, some had merely represented areas without making Compulsory Purchase Orders, and other Authorities were dealing with the whole process of clearance on an ad hoc informal basis. These methods had to be rationalised and a tidying-up process had to be commenced. This proved to be a mammoth task involving the very close scrutiny of records, which in some cases were non-existent, and absorbed months of valuable time.

It was obvious, at this time, that differing standards had existed when classifying properties as sub-standard and potential clearance property and it was felt that the only way in which this problem could be rationalised was to carry out an intensive survey of the whole Borough.

A one-in-thirty survey was undertaken, in conjunction with the Department of Planning and Estates Management, and the results of the survey highlighted the areas which required a more detailed investigation. This was subsequently carried out and the information collated emphasised not merely the value but also the accuracy of the survey. It was discovered that 1147 properties were so sub-standard that clearance was required.

Bearing in mind the problems associated with rehousing the occupants, re-development of the cleared sites and the financial commitments involved, it was apparent that a programme should be planned in order to phase the clearance over a 5 year period. This was completed and accepted by the Council in January 1975. The programme was drawn up bearing in mind the emphasis which has been placed upon rehabilitation of existing properties and should be regarded as flexible. It is accepted that should a block of properties be improved to present-day standards, and this would involve a concerted effort on behalf of all the owners of the houses, then the properties would be removed from the programme.

The housing survey has been the guiding factor used in the assessment of standards of properties throughout the Borough and it will again be so used when the preparatory work for Housing Action Areas, Priority Neighbourhoods and General Improvement Areas is being developed.

The administrative procedure for the clearance of unfit and sub-standard houses has been developing steadily during the year. The lengthy delay between representation and final demolition is leading to considerable vandalism thus tending to extend the areas of blight beyond the boundaries of the proposed clearance areas. Every effort is being made

to reduce this period to a minimum. At the same time discussions have been held with the various nationalised industries in order to streamline the procedure involved in removing the services from properties in clearance areas immediately they are vacated. This will enable the houses to be secured effectively and quickly and thus remove as much temptation as possible from those people inclined to commit acts of vandalism.

The individual properties scattered throughout the Borough which have been left unoccupied for a long period of time are causing serious problems to the Department. A survey has revealed approximately 100 such premises, situated, in the main, in the midst of quite reasonable residential areas. It is vital that properties of this nature are found and dealt with quickly before they begin to have an adverse effect on the neighbourhood. Unfortunately the existing legislation is not too helpful and the various solutions available are receiving very careful study at the present time.

The Housing Act 1957, section 16(4) permits the Authority to accept from an owner an undertaking that his premises will not be used for human habitation until the Council are satisfied that they have been rendered fit for that purpose. During the year 29 such undertakings have been accepted, mainly from properties situated within the clearance programme. Unfortunately, in attempting to solve one problem it is very easy to create another elsewhere and this is no exception. The Borough Housing Officer is, on occasions, having great difficulty in offering suitable accommodation to the occupants of houses in clearance areas, principally due to their age and family circumstances, thus increasing their period of occupation of completely unfit accommodation.

I feel certain that the problems I have highlighted in the last two paragraphs could, in some way, be used to achieve a common solution and, in fact, this is the subject of close examination at the present time, however, it may be that the present financial crisis will be a major deciding factor in the eventual solution. Whatever this may prove to be, I sincerely hope that the health and well being of the residents of Hyndburn are given the utmost consideration.

The next 12 months will be an exceptionally busy period in this section of the Department's work. Having completed at least a portion of the ground work following local government re-organisation, and bearing in mind the problems which I have already discussed, it is now possible to consider the next steps to be taken regarding the improvement of the general housing stock in the private sector. Preliminary investigations have already been commenced into the development of Housing Action Areas, Priority Neighbourhoods and General Improvement Areas and I hope that the results of this work will be available for discussion by the Members of the Council before the end of 1975. The apparent absence of Housing Associations who are prepared to undertake

works of repair and renovation is noticeable, and it may be worthy of consideration that the Council encourage the formation of such an association in this area of the county. The powers of Housing Associations are very wide, particularly under recent new legislation, and grants are readily available to them.

Progress of Clearance Programme
at 31st December, 1974

<u>Demolition Deferred</u>	<u>No. of dwellings</u>
Thompson Court C.O. 1965 (Accrington)	5
Cockerill Court C.O. 1969 (Accrington)	3
<u>Confirmed and Awaiting Demolition</u>	
Whalley Road No. 2 Accrington	3
King Street, Accrington	8
Whalley Road No. 1 Accrington	9
Cross Street, Accrington	12
Barnes Street No. 2 Accrington	6
Pitt Street No. 5 Accrington	31
Commercial Street/Ernest Street, Church	7
Lodge Terrace, Oswaldtwistle	11
	—
	87
	—
<u>Represented and Awaiting Confirmation</u>	
Plantation Street No. 5 Accrington	35
Pitt Street Nos. 6a, 6b, 6c, Accrington	22
Henry Street Nos. 2a, 2b, Church	25
Sparth Road No. 1 Clayton-le-Moors	16
	—
	98
	—

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT 1955

The main function of the section is carried out under this legislation, the majority of subordinate food legislation being made under powers given in this Act.

Details of samples of food and drugs obtained and analysed during the year are listed below according to classification.

<u>Article</u>	<u>Number Analysed</u>	<u>Number Adulterated or non-standard</u>
Milk	116	18
Dairy Products	1	-
Cereal Products	1	1
Cooked Meats/Meat Products	34	17
Baby Foods	3	-
Meats	2	-
Fruit	5	-
Vegetables	1	-
Medicinal Preparations	9	-
Alcoholic Beverages	3	-
Confectionery	3	-
Fish	5	1
Sweet Confectionery	1	1
Preserves	1	-
Soft Drinks	3	-
Canned Goods	3	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTALS	191	38
	<hr/>	<hr/>

An attempt is made to obtain as wide a range of products as possible as well as a variety of producers. However, one is guided by the advice of the County Analyst on articles to submit to the Laboratory.

A decision was taken early in the year to obtain as many locally produced foodstuffs as possible and to give assistance and advice to local producers. This was an attempt to "put our own house in order" before we were faced with requests and demands from other Authorities.. to investigate food produced within Hyndburn.

The apparent adulteration of milk samples was mainly as a result of low solids-non-fat in the milk which could be attributed to the bad summer months and the high cost of feeding stuffs. Nevertheless it is an offence to sell milk with low solids and the producers were warned in each case.

The high incidence of apparent adulteration in cooked meats is due to the fact that the products which were sampled had a designation applied to them which was not the appropriate name for that standard of product. In these cases it applied to "potted meat", where the standard for potted meat is higher than local producers were supplying and a different name should have been applied to the product.

No prosecutions were taken during the year although one case is being considered at the present time. This is as a result of a complaint of a fly embedded in the pastry of a meat pie.

The table which follows is a classification of the various types of food premises in the Borough.

<u>Type of Premises</u>	<u>Number on Register</u>
Bakehouses	52
Butchers	64
Cafes, Snack bars, etc.	96
Confectioners	30
Dairies	3
Fish Fryers	55
Fishmongers	1
Greengrocers and Fruiterers	53
Grocers	219
Hawkers	17
Ice Cream Premises	78
Licensed Premises	164
Market Stalls	90
Preserved Foods	15
Sweet Confectionery	71
Others	17
	<hr/>
TOTAL	1,025

MILK (SPECIAL DESIGNATION) REGULATIONS 1949, 1954

All samples for bacteriological examination were carried out by the Public Health Laboratory at Preston.

13 samples of pasteurised milk, 27 samples of untreated milk, 4 samples of sterilised milk and 3 samples of UHT milk were examined. 3 samples of ice cream were also submitted for bacteriological investigation.

Food samples were also obtained for the purpose of ascertaining the presence in the food of any pathogenic bacteria. The following were those examined: 1 sample of mussels, 1 sample of imported cherries, 1 sample each of imported chicken fat and chicken extract powder and 1 sample of imported prawns.

Of those samples examined bacteriologically, 6 samples of milk failed the methylene blue test for the cleanliness of the milk and the producers were warned regarding these occurrences.

One sample of mussels was unsatisfactory and had a high bacterial count. The sample was of raw mussels and these would normally be boiled before consumption. Nevertheless the source of the mussels was traced and action taken by the coastal Authority concerned.

A sample of tripe taken locally was heavily contaminated by bacterial flora including organisms likely to cause food poisoning. The producer was contacted, interviewed and warned as to manufacturing processes and handling methods. Subsequent samples proved satisfactory.

MILK AND DAIRIES (GENERAL) REGULATIONS 1959

There are 370 milk distributors within the Borough.

MILK (SPECIAL DESIGNATION) REGULATIONS 1963, 1965

There are 370 dealers in milk, 2 licences are in operation for the pasteurisation of milk and 2 for the sterilisation of milk.

In the Hyndburn area there are 54 producers of milk of whom 39 are producers/retailers. The producers who do not retail either send their milk direct to the large dairies for treatment or sell to dairymen for retail sale by them.

As can be seen from the figures given above there is a large trade and business in the retailing of milk. The main figures for distributors/dealers are largely due to the fact that very many grocers and often retail shops sell milk; they are nevertheless dealing in milk albeit in the prepacked state. It is necessary to license these dealers, milk being a perishable commodity and also one which can be the vector of many diseases. being an ideal medium for the growth of pathogens.

INSPECTION OF OTHER FOODSTUFFS

No food was seized during the year but a large amount of food was surrendered.

A large proportion of work in this field covers the inspection and condemnation of unsound foodstuffs. The term "unsound" covers foods which may not be unfit but which are aesthetically or physically not saleable. The term "condemnation" covers those foods surrendered voluntarily by the trade and those foods on which our advice has been given and the food considered "unfit".

IMPORTED FOODSTUFFS

More and more foodstuffs are being imported into this country and a vast majority of these imports are transported by means of large containers which are sealed in the country of manufacture. Often the duty of inspecting these foodstuffs when they enter the United Kingdom which should be carried out at the ports, is not done and the responsibility falls upon the inland Health Authority. There are a number of firms within Hyndburn who receive this type of container at frequent intervals and inspection of the food and container is necessary upon arrival.

This function is obviously one of an essential nature as very often the foodstuff is in a raw or basic state and is being imported for

processing or manufacture into a more sophisticated food. Hence, if the basic food is not satisfactory then the food bought over the counter cannot be sound.

Examination has not been confined to one of a physical or technical nature, but often samples of the food concerned are submitted to the scrutiny of bacteriological or chemical examination.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES ACTS 1958 AND 1974
SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS ACT 1958

Within Hyndburn there is only one licensed red meat slaughterhouse which is situated in Great Harwood.

The figures set out on page 20 give the number and types of animals slaughtered and a breakdown of the amount of meat which is condemned by the meat inspection staff.

As can be seen, the number of animals slaughtered gradually increased to a peak in November. The figures serve to show the panic which affected the livestock trade in the latter part of 1974 and for which we shall no doubt suffer in the years to come. Many, many animals were slaughtered as prices of livestock began to drop with the advent of the high price of feeding-stuffs.

The cost of the meat inspection service is recovered from the trade on a scale dependent upon the type of animals inspected, a higher fee being charged for larger animals which require more inspection time. The maximum charges are laid down by statutory instrument.

The service is full time and one meat inspector is permanently based at the slaughterhouse.

During the year 4 cases of cysticerci were found in beef cattle the carcasses of which were sent for refrigeration.

In early September we had an outbreak of Swine Vesicular disease in a consignment of pigs which arrived at the slaughterhouse for slaughter. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Veterinarians were called in and the animals were slaughtered and the carcasses disposed of by interment.

SLAUGHTER OF POULTRY ACT 1967

There are two premises within the Borough where poultry slaughtering is carried out as a major part of the business. Obviously, many small premises including farms and smallholdings are scattered throughout the district but in these premises the sale of poultry is merely incidental to the main business.

SUMMARY OF ANIMALS SLAUGHTERED AND PARTS CONDEMNED

MONTH	CATTLE	CONDEMNED		CALVES	CONDEMNED		SHEEP & LAMBS	CONDEMNED		PIGS	CONDEMNED		TOTAL CARCASSES	TOTAL CONDEMNED	
		WHOLE	PART		WHOLE	PART		WHOLE	PART		WHOLE	PART		WHOLE	PART
APRIL	113	-	31	-	-	-	1069	-	151	1376	-	227	2558	-	409
MAY	23	-	14	-	-	-	1014	-	149	1428	-	204	2465	-	367
JUNE	119	-	30	1	-	-	1137	7	139	1148	1	144	2405	8	313
JULY	95	-	29	-	-	-	2968	-	262	940	1	110	4003	1	401
AUGUST	112	-	37	-	-	-	3559	2	260	616	-	120	4287	2	417
SEPT.	245	-	106	184	-	-	10145	33	1888	1342	-	270	11916	33	2264
OCT.	223	-	82	138	-	2	9964	34	2655	1245	6	323	11570	40	3062
NOV.	399	1	159	110	1	1	9520	24	2575	862	-	230	10891	26	2965
DEC.	661	1	300	101	-	4	7528	22	1949	1433	10	352	9723	33	2605
TOTALS	2251	2	851	537	1	7	50203	131	10245	14227	22	2411	67218	156	13514

The two premises in question are concerned with the whole field of poultry in that both operate the "rearing, slaughtering and retail trade" method of poultry production. Thus problems with these premises are small; any malpractices are reflected in their own trade and as a consequence a high standard is maintained.

One of the operators has recently increased his throughput and raised his standards by completely modernising the plant and the second operator is in the process of bringing his premises to a higher standard.

Since the United Kingdom joined the E.E.C. we have been obliged to accept certain standards demanded by the Community and unfortunately the poultry trade is one of the first to suffer these impositions. The home trade in fresh poultry must comply with E.E.C. standards by February 1976 and thus many of the poultry operators are having to look critically at their own methods. This cannot be a bad thing, but it may impose standards and requirements which are unnecessary.

The Department's staff will require retraining and may possibly become involved in poultry meat inspection to a degree to which they have never been accustomed. Further requirements could well insist that veterinary surgeons supervise the inspection service, the primary reason being that in Europe the Veterinarians have undertaken the service from its inception. We do not have sufficient numbers of properly trained staff to cope: consequently there could be difficulties.

The following table shows the numbers of poultry slaughtered in the Borough during the year, but excludes those birds sold "at the farm gate".

	Hens	Chickens	Capons	Turkeys
Plant No. 1	1461	38719	-	1798
Plant No. 2	16140	115800	-	1682
Totals	17601	154519	-	3480

OFFICES, SHOPS & RAILWAY PREMISES ACT 1963

Duties under the Act resulted in 234 visits being made by the inspectorial staff for the purpose of conducting 117 general inspections.

Investigations were carried out in connection with all the accidents reported.

Details of registered premises

	Offices	Retail Shops	Wholesale Shops, Warehouses	Catering Establishments	Fuel Storage Depots
No. of registered premises at end of year	150	351	26	60	7
No. of registered premises receiving inspections during year	29	69	3	15	1

Analysis of persons employed in registered premises by workplace

<u>Class</u>	<u>No. of persons employed</u>
Offices	912
Retail Shops	1471
Wholesale Departments - Warehouses	274
Catering Establishments	360
Fuel Storage Depots	17
	<hr/>
	Total 3034
	<hr/>
Total males	1215
Total females	1819

ACCIDENTS

The Act requires that any person who is injured at work in premises which are registrable under the Act, and that person is absent from work for more than three days, then the proprietor of these premises shall notify to the enforcement authority the facts of the case.

Many employers are aware of these requirements and in fact notify the Department of the instance. Unfortunately it is suspected that many accidents are not reported. Enforcement of this legislation is very difficult when one considers that there are so many qualifications to the requirements which make many accidents non-reportable.

The following resumé gives an analysis of the accidents reported during the year.

Total Number of Accidents reported (4 men, 4 women, 2 girls)	10
Retail Shops (including the stockrooms thereof)	10
Fatalities	-

Analysis of cause:

Handling goods	3	
Falls from one level to another	2	
Fall on same level	1	
Misuse of hand tools	1	
Struck by falling object	1	
Stepping on or striking object	1	
Miscellaneous	<u>1</u>	10

Analysis of nature of accident:

Bruising, crushing or concussion	3	
Fractures and dislocations	2	
Sprains and strains	2	
Open wounds and surface injury	2	
Internal injury	<u>1</u>	10

Analysis of site of injury:

Hands	3	
Feet	2	
Lower leg or ankle	3	
Back	1	
Trunk	<u>1</u>	10

LIFTS AND HOISTS

The object of the Act basically is to improve working conditions and safety. One of the most dangerous mechanical services used in workplaces are lifts, hoists or other devices for raising or lowering persons and objects from one level to another.

The actual safety and soundness of lifts and hoists is basically split between, on the one hand, enforcement by the appropriate Local Authority, and, on the other, examination and reporting by a competent Authority. The term "competent Authority", in most cases, applies to lift manufacturers and engineers, and, in the main, applies to persons who are experienced in lift examination and who are employed by insurance companies.

The insurance companies are required to furnish the enforcement authorities with their reports on examination of any lift and hoist which they may have cause to inspect and/or insure.

During the year it was necessary to reprimand one company for two faulty conditions of their lift, the company effectively complied with all requirements.

SHOPS ACTS 1950 ETC.

All retail shops are in some way affected by one or more requirements of the Shops Acts, be it early closing, Sunday trading or in the form of

the employment of young persons.

It is impossible to enumerate the numbers and types of premises involved and also the numbers of young persons employed. The Acts do not make it mandatory to register with the Local Authority, consequently the staff involved have first to "go out and find" the premises concerned and only then can the provisions of the legislation be enforced. Unfortunately this is a very time-consuming task.

ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTIONDomestic Smoke

From the 1st April the Department was engaged in the assessment of grants and checking that the fixing of appliances was carried out satisfactorily in respect of Nos. 4, 5, 6, Areas in Oswaldtwistle, No. 5 in Great Harwood and Nos. 11 and 13 in Accrington. At the conclusion of the year a little more than half the Borough was included in Smoke Control Areas.

The final area in Great Harwood, came into operation on the 1st August, 1974 and the programme for the district of Church was completed in 1971.

At the end of the year it was realised that the number of persons applying for grant aid was considerably less than the number estimated who would apply. It appears that householders are increasingly converting their fireplaces ahead of Smoke Control Areas.

A programme of Smoke Control Orders to complete the work by 1981 was drawn up and submitted to the Council for their approval. This programme envisaged that approximately 2,500 houses a year would be eligible for conversion and receipt of grant.

The clear view in winter time across the valleys is one of the rewards for the work of Smoke Control.

Industrial Premises

The work of obtaining and maintaining a wholesome atmosphere devolves jointly upon the Department of the Environment (The Alkali and Clean Air Inspectorate) and the Local Authority (Environmental Health Department).

There are seven registered industrial premises in which the Alkali Inspector is concerned but in view of the numerous processes involved in other industries his advice on chemical matters is readily obtained.

Observations made by staff of the Department and complaints received from members of the public, focused attention upon certain premises which require more than usual attention. The conversion of furnaces from coal to oil has more or less solved the smoke problem but has highlighted the nuisance from acid smuts. Such a complaint of many years standing in one of the premises registered with the Department of the Environment was resolved satisfactorily when a large brickworks changed their method of firing from oil to gas.

The problem of chemical fume from one factory is apparent at intervals. The works are sited in a valley in close proximity to a river, a canal and a reservoir and in addition the district experiences a moist and a heavy atmosphere. This prevents regular dissipation of the gases.

Unfortunately at times the effluent gases from numerous processes combine to form a fume.

The management realise the importance of preventing the nuisance and one of the processes will be revised in 1975, by which it is hoped to reduce greatly the incidence of fume.

In another district of the Borough emissions from two nearby factories affected a newly erected housing estate. Some difficulty was experienced in deciding the source of the various complaints in respect of each factory. However, when this was done the managements quickly solved the dust emission but the soot and odour problems remain to be solved.

A permanent solution to the smoke problem of an intermittent nature from furnaces which burn a mixture of coal and wood waste has yet to be resolved.

New Installations

The Clean Air Act 1956, section 3, requires that persons who install a furnace of greater capacity than 55,000 B.T.U.'s shall inform the Local Authority. There appears a reluctance upon the part of certain persons to comply with this statute.

National Survey

Since 1953 Accrington Municipal Borough have participated in the national survey for volumetric measurement, of smoke and sulphur dioxide in the atmosphere. Over this period there has been a steady and consistent reduction in the amount of pollution recorded.

The site at the Town Hall was transferred to 119 Blackburn Road, Accrington and a second site is that at Cambridge Street Methodist School, Accrington.

Pollution from Motor Vehicles

As the district atmosphere is becoming cleaner by the introduction of smoke control areas and by industrialists ensuring that fuel is not wasted by a smoking chimney, pedestrians, who live in the hilly parts of the district, are beginning to raise questions of smoke emissions from motor vehicles.

NOISE

The Noise Abatement Act 1960 has been repealed by the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

In this district there are few factories which may be termed noisy but there are numerous factories which are situate adjoining or adjacent to dwelling houses. Additional problems may arise where evening

or night time working takes place, or in summer time when factory windows and doors are open for ventilation.

Another problem is the noise created by fans used in mechanical draught for gas or oil fired boilers especially when these boilers are used at night.

The Department is pleased to be in possession of a good sound pressure level meter which, together with "British Standard 4142 Method of Rating Industrial Noise Affecting, Mixed Residential and Industrial Areas" plays an important part in controlling the noise levels of the district.

In the short period of nine months since this section was set up it appears that the nuisance from noise in more instances than not, may be due to the person placing a machine in a certain position or manner with little consideration to the effect it may have upon the environment. However, in the instances of industrial complaints co-operation by the management has generally achieved success.

The new legislation "Health and Safty at Work Act" and the "Control of Pollution Act" and soon new regulations and Codes of Practice made under these Acts will pay special attention to environmental control, including the establishment of an acceptable noise level: and noise abatement zones.

OFFENSIVE TRADES

The definition of offensive trades is contained in Sections 107 and 108 of the Public Health Act 1936.

Within the Hyndburn Area 3 offensive trades are in existence. A "fat melter" at Church, a "gut scraper" at Rishton and a "tripe boiler" in Accrington. These latter premises are also, understandably, Food Premises and as such have been visited by the Food Section of the Department. As a result of the visits a report on the unsatisfactory conditions existing therein has been submitted to the Council.

The "fat melter" at Church also continues to give rise to complaint of smells. This is a long standing nuisance in the Church area and further research will be necessary if this problem is to be solved.

No nuisances have arisen at the "gut scrapers" at Rishton and as their products are also used in the Food Industry the premises will be included with those covered by the Food and Drugs Section of the Department.

CLEANSING

The Cleansing Services which probably, to the general public, are the "Shop Window" of the Local Authority created a number of problems following Local Government Re-organisation in 1974. Prior to this date each of the constituent authorities operated its own refuse collection, refuse disposal and ancillary services. Fortunately within the Hyndburn area all the cleansing services operated under the control of the Health Departments.

As from 1st April, 1974 the new Authority became responsible for the whole of the collection of refuse and also became agents for the Lancashire County Council on refuse disposal which became a county function. Considerable work was carried out immediately prior to re-organisation in an effort to provide continuity of service as from 1st April. It will be appreciated that whilst basically providing the same service the constituent authorities were all operating on different systems of work. Various bonus and incentive schemes were in operation and there were considerable differences in the types of machines in use, each authority having operated a system best suited to its own area.

It was thus very necessary to implement a system which would apply throughout the whole of the Hyndburn area in order that the employees received similar conditions of service. During the appraisal of the cleansing service it was obvious that new machines would be required to replace certain of the existing vehicles which had been kept running beyond their normal economic life because of the advent of re-organisation. The constituent authorities had agreed that this would be necessary and consequently an order was placed well in advance of re-organisation for two new refuse collection vehicles. These were commissioned during July, 1974. Upon re-organisation it was decided to operate the services from three depots one each at Great Harwood, Oswaldtwistle and Accrington. A Cleansing Supervisor was placed in charge of each of these depots with the overall control being in the hands of the Cleansing Superintendent working from Accrington. This system operated for four months during which time it was found difficult to co-ordinate the men and the machines with the result that different standards of service were being operated from each depot. In August the Great Harwood and Oswaldtwistle yards were closed and as from that time the service has operated completely from the Moreton Street Cleansing Depot in Accrington. In addition the Cleansing Supervisors were allocated control of specific functions throughout the whole of Hyndburn instead of each covering all the functions in a smaller area. This system has operated reasonably successfully since then.

Despite the introduction of an adequate bonus incentive scheme the high rate of sickness and absenteeism has seriously interfered with the smooth operations of all the services. Generally speaking the refuse collection service has been fully manned but this has been at the expense of the street cleansing and other ancillary services. Unfortunately this sickness rate is still running at a high level and is one of the problems that must be tackled in the future.

Apart from teething troubles when the new systems were introduced in April it is felt that the services provided have been of a fairly high standard. One of the main problems still facing the Department is that of litter. A study is being made of this problem and various steps are being taken in an effort to improve the situation. There does not appear to be one simple solution as litter results from a culmination of a number of factors, although it must be stated that the indifference of the majority of the public to this matter must be considered as one of the main contributing factors. It is possible that additional litter bins will be provided at suitable points throughout the area, but the major difficulty will be persuading the public to use them.

As to the future of the refuse collection service, it is to be hoped that once the severe financial restrictions limiting extensions to the service have been lifted it will be possible to continue the improvements. The provision of plastic and paper bags as bin liners has been a popular move both with the public and the operators and this is one avenue of improvement which can be extended. It is also possible that improvements can be made to the trade and commercial waste collections but it must be stated quite categorically that an economical rate of operation must be implemented. Already a good service is provided for householders who require extra collections to dispose of unwanted furniture or other household items. I am sure that an extension of this service to cover the smaller trades and industries would be appreciated. It is most unlikely that the Department will ever be able to undertake the complete removal of all industrial waste, but the commercial firms operating in this line of business are now generally of a high standard and as far as Hyndburn is concerned cause few difficulties.

The transfer of responsibility for the disposal of refuse from the District Authorities to the County Authorities as from 1st April, 1974, created very few practical difficulties in Hyndburn. The Hyndburn Authority is continuing to administer this function until March, 1976 at which time it would appear that the County Council will assume the operation themselves. Close co-operation has been maintained between the Department and the County Waste Disposal Officer and his staff. It is fairly obvious that refuse disposal on a regional basis can be handled far better by the County Authority although it will be very necessary for close liaison to be maintained between the collection and disposal authorities; this I am sure will be done.

STREET CLEANSING

One of the main problems facing not only Hyndburn but all authorities at this time is that of litter.

Street Cleansing including the control of litter, is a service provided by the Department. Unfortunately for economic and practical reasons this has always been considered the "Cinderella" of the Cleansing Department. Frequently the section is denuded of staff to reinforce the

staff engaged on what is generally considered to be the more important function of refuse collection.

Over recent months, however, it has been found that one of the major sources of complaint is that created by the anti-social members of the public who deposit litter - a word used in the very widest sense and covering any waste materials discarded haphazardly by the public.

The Street Cleansing section can be subdivided into three:-

1. The mechanical sweepers
2. The manual labour equipped with street orderlies
3. The District Sweeping Team.

At the present time 3 mechanical sweepers are available and these cover the majority of the roads in the Borough at varying frequencies. Some are swept three times a week, some weekly, others at two to four week intervals and the remainder less frequently.

The schedules are varied according to need, the mechanical sweepers being diverted to clear spillages etc. as necessary.

It was found that in the main centres of each community within Hyndburn the mechanical sweepers were only partially effective as they were hampered by parked vehicles and were unable to reach litter which accumulated on pavements or in other inaccessible sites. Consequently a manual sweeper is employed in each town centre (two in Accrington) mainly to clear litter. This system appears to be working reasonably well although problems still exist mainly in the Accrington centre.

More litter bins are to be provided around the market/market hall/bus station area and a study of the market itself as it relates to litter is in progress.

To complement the mechanical sweepers and the manual sweepers working on their own, a district sweeping team operates when labour is available. This team of 2, 3 or 4 men acts when and where necessary clearing the heavier accumulations of "litter" such as rubble, soil, furniture etc. dumped in back streets or on Council owned land. This team, when kept operational, has proved to be very effective although unfortunately areas cleared in this way have deteriorated since and will no doubt require further visits in the future.

Finally throughout the spring and summer months weedspraying is undertaken as and when labour is available and this too helps to keep the Borough looking more presentable.

Apart from the litter problem, which will never be solved until the public accept their responsibility, it is felt that generally speaking the Borough is kept as clean as can be expected with the financial and staffing limitations.

In conclusion, I should like to thank yourself, your Deputy and the Members of the Council for their support, encouragement and understanding during the year. Similarly, my thanks also to my colleague officials for their most valuable co-operation and willing assistance at all times.

Finally, my gratitude is due to an exceedingly capable, conscientious and loyal staff without whom the Department could not function efficiently.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

G. GREENWOOD

Environmental Health Officer

